

Vol. 9– November 2016

HEIRS

Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society

newsletter



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Inside this issue...

*Japanese-Canadians
& war time labour camps*

Newsletter News!

Welcome to the November newsletter

As we present our last newsletter for 2016, we humbly look back on the diversity of subjects explored during our monthly meetings, and the amount of support the Resource Centre provides to Harrow's genealogy archives as we continue to index, digitize, and provide specific family information to members and other interested parties.

It takes lots of work to choose, write articles, edit submissions, research images and present as many interesting stories as we can throughout the 9 newsletters you receive through membership. We have appreciated the kudos we receive throughout the year for our efforts, and for our promotional assistance to other local events each newsletter. But perhaps the biggest thank you is shown through the renewal of memberships, and attendance at our meetings and trips.

Thank you & best wishes for the remainder of 2016.

Next Meeting

When: Thursday, November 24th, 1:30 PM

Where: Harrow-Colchester Arena Community Centre

Local author Gary Wells will speak to HEIRS at our November 24 meeting, the last before we break for December and the holiday season.

Gary has researched the topic of Japanese labour sent to Essex County during WW2. After Pearl Harbour was attacked, suspicion fell on Japanese Canadians who MIGHT be sympathetic to the Japanese military cause. Families along Canada's Pacific coast were forced off their land and sent inland away from possible contact with Japanese forces.

The men were then sent to various locations to be used as farm labour, and some were sent to this area, right here in Essex County.

Families lost their property and rights, and were split up, often at great distances, on suspicion alone. Some returned home after the war, but had no home to go back to.

Others stayed where they had worked, and sent for their families to join them. Gary compiled a book on this story, and he will share his findings with us.

There should be some surprises as he presents to us, as already a few "I didn't know that" moments were illuminated in his book.

It's an overlooked and ignored part of our history, and Gary will shed light on it for HEIRS. All are welcome to attend.



The HEIRS meeting on October 26 was a very personal & emotional gathering, as Matsuye Yako told her story.

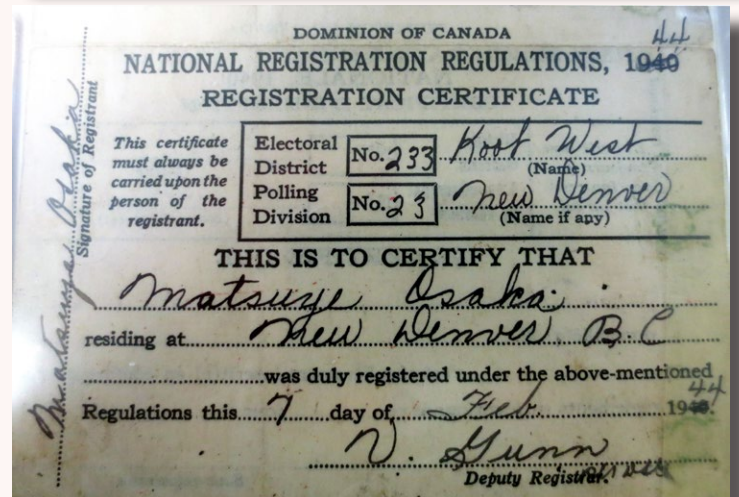
She was born in Canada of Japanese parents, and went to school in British Columbia through the 1930s. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, all Japanese living in Canada were ordered to be moved inland, a minimum of 100 miles from the Pacific coast. They were under suspicion of being sympathetic to the Japanese military objectives.

Matsuye spoke about being the eldest of 5 children, not understanding why they were being deprived of all they had, and being forced to leave their way of life behind. The young men were sent to road construction crews or other forms of labour, while the families were gathered into internment camps, which featured primitive housing and living conditions, many restrictions and curfews, and little in the way of basic rights or comfort.

Racial dislike emerged at many levels, as Canada was no longer a welcoming nation, even though these people were Canadian.

Matsuye explained the way Japanese-Canadians were treated, how they were moved from camp to camp, and how at the end of the war in 1945, they were given the choice to stay in Canada or go back to Japan, a nation now devastated by war, and offering little hope to those who might want to return. Those who chose to stay could not return home again, but had to move east of the Rocky Mountains; their property and businesses were forever lost to them.

She eventually wound up in Chatham, Ontario, working at the local hospital. She married, raised a family and is now a proud grandmother. She speaks about her experiences to many groups and school gatherings, including St. Clair College, trying to keep the story alive, as our Canadian history books do not even mention the internment camps and the unfairness during the war years.



Matsuye has been awarded many honours, including the Peace Medal from the YMCA, as one who survived and moved on with her life. As she said, **"I have forgiven, but I have not forgotten."**



None of us should allow this shameful episode to pass into history unremembered.

4 Upcoming Events

November 5th

The Canadian Transportation Museum and Historic Village on Arner Town Line offers a indoor flea market from 8 AM to 3 PM, \$5 per adult with kids 12 and under free.

November 5 & 6

The J R Park Homestead offers a “Stair Step Basket” workshop on both Saturday and Sunday, from 9 AM to 5 PM each day. Instructor Nancy Hager provides all materials and instruction to make a great gift for someone else or for yourself. Course fee is \$75. Pre-register at jrph@erca.org or 519-738-2029.

November 17th

HEIRS own Chris Carter will be speaking at the Transportation Museum from 2 to 3 PM. His topic will be ‘Essex County in the 1830s: the Rebellious Decade of Upper Canada.’ Lecture is free, and Chris will have many of his books available for purchase. They might be a great Christmas present for that history enthusiast you know!

November 18th

The Leamington-Mersea Historical Society holds their 19th annual Heritage Awards Dinner at the Roma Club on Seacliff Drive, Leamington. Doors open at 6, with dinner at 6:30. Tickets are \$30 only in advance, available by calling LMHS President Paul Bunnett-Jones at 519-326-1691 or by email to pbunnettjones@cogeco.ca. **Honorees include the Joe Colasanti family, Leamington Rotary Club, the late Fred Eplett, Vi Pepper, Larry McDonald and Joe Wickham for service to their community.**

November 19th

The Canadian Transportation Museum on Arner Town Line will hold a Christmas Crafts Show & Sale (adults \$3, kids under 12 free).

November 19

Bicentennial branch of the United Empire Loyalists will meet on Saturday, at 1 PM at the Church of the Epiphany, 96 Main Street in Kingsville. Speaker Jane Buttery will talk on “Appreciating the Shawnee Way of Life and the Role of Two Women During Difficult Times 1780-1815”. For more information, call 519-995-3529, or email info.bicentennial@uelac.org. All are welcome to attend.

November 24

The Essex County Historical Society (ECHS) will hold their meeting at 7 PM in the Essex Railway Station in Essex. The speaker is yet to be announced though, but refreshments will follow. The public is most welcome to attend... please bring a non-perishable food item as a donation for the Essex Food Bank.

November 26th

The J R Park Homestead offers a “Deck the Holidays” workshop on Saturday from 2 to 4 PM. This is a hands-on wreath-making workshop, using natural materials. \$20 registration fee includes materials and instruction, a mug of warm cider or cocoa and a holiday snack from The Homestead’s hearth. Pre-register at JRPH@erca.org or 519-738-2029

December 1st

HEIRS hosts a trolley trip to Windsor’s Willistead Manor, decked out in its Christmas finery. The day will include lunch at the Ciacaro Club and a guided tour.

December 11th

The Eve of St Nicholas, from 2-4 PM, shows off the JR Park Homestead in holiday splendour. The house & grounds will be decorated, & you can partake of roasted chestnuts, mulled cider, gingerbread cookies & meet Ruprecht & Belsnickel, 2 of Santa’s historical counterparts.

December 13th

It's a candlelight Christmas at the JR Park Homestead, with a guided tour of and a chance to bake a treat on the hearth and craft your own ornament.

Pre-registration is needed, \$15 per person. Join us and ring the sleigh bells for Christmas.

December 18th

The Canadian Transportation Museum and Historic Village on Arner Town Line will hold a "Breakfast Buffet With Santa" will take place from 8 AM to 2 PM, with photo opportunities galore. (adults \$10 plus tax, while kids 5 to 12 years are \$4 each, kids under 5 years old free).

Trolley Tour to Willistead Manor

Date: Thursday
December 1st, 2016



Leaves arena: 11:15 AM
Lunch: 1PM
Returns: 3:45PM



Join us - only \$40 / person*
(cash or cheque only)

***Includes lunch buffet at the Ciociaro Club & guided tour of the manor, all decked out in Holiday fashion!**

~ Open to Everyone ~

BOOK BEFORE NOVEMBER 22ND!



Call 519 738-3700
to leave your name & phone number!

HEIRS is closed for the month of December & will re-open Jan. 3, 2017.

Merry Christmas!

SPECIAL NOTICE

As of January 1, 2017, those members behind in their dues to HEIRS will NOT receive the monthly newsletters.

Please ensure you have paid your membership up to date, and don't miss a single issue! Membership makes a great, inexpensive family gift as well.

Contact our office if you are not sure if you are in arrears. Check the last page of this newsletter for our hours of operation.

From the HEIRS mailbag....



Roy Levergood and I felt quite privileged to be invited to the dedication of the memorial for George Levergood and others who died with him near Fort Freeland in Pennsylvania, during the American Revolution.

His death was a pivotal event in the history of our families, for it led to the marriage of George's widow, Anna Maria Werner Levergood, to John Lypps, and the eventual establishment of the Levergood and Lypps families in the Colchester area.

Our trip, and the unravelling of this amazing frontier story, would never have happened were it not for the Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS).

Thank you, HEIRS volunteers!

*- Don Gall and Roy Levergood,
HEIRS members*

Reminder

...runs until December 2016

"Ice Age Mammals" is an exciting travelling exhibit from the Canadian Museum of Nature, which opened October 20th.



Real fossils, casts, specimens, interactive displays and murals bring these creatures to life.

Visit www.museumwindsor.ca or call 519 253-1812 for more information.

Lest we forget...

We were recently asked if HEIRS was not having a Remembrance Day meeting this Fall. We are indeed, though we approach it from a different point of view. Any war involves much tragedy, as young people on both sides of the struggle are forced into situations they do not want to be involved in.

Many are given a weapon and training, and then sent to battle where they have to kill other young people across the way. It is not a matter of right or wrong to them, it is literally “kill or be killed”. Those who come home whole are lucky, while many return badly and permanently injured, and still others, far too many of them, never return at all, and even their burial place is unknown.

Many can tell you first hand that of those who “come home uninjured” many will never be quite the same again. Director Ted Steele’s nephew served 6 months in Afghanistan, as a peace-keeper. Several friends of his committed suicide and others cannot fit back into civilian life after living in constant danger and likely being forced to kill to survive.

The movies have presented the World Wars as Good against Evil, a completely black & white issue with no gray areas of interpretation. Let us remember that there were good and not so good people on both sides and families on both sides mourned their dead.

We wanted to use the October meeting to illustrate the unfairness with which Canadian policies treated Canadians of Japanese descent during the war years of the 1940s. Innocent people were caught up in a time of fear, and made to pay the price. Our October meeting focused on one family and its struggles through the war years and relocation. Our November meeting will look at Essex County and its relocated Japanese-Canadian farm labourers, some very close to Harrow, yet now an untold and ignored chapter of local history.

We also thought this would be a very appropriate time to discuss this history into our meetings, since we are about to enter 2017- and it will be a Year of Remembrance. April of 1917, saw the Battle of Vimy Ridge, and HEIRS will mark its 100th anniversary at our April meeting. There is a new initiative under way which as yet has not been released to the media, but we hope to have a representative speak to us in the new year on this memorial plan as well. It promises to be special.

Free 7-Part Lecture Series Featuring Local Award Winning Author **CHRIS CARTER**

- OCTOBER 20: The Windsor You Did Not Know
NOVEMBER 17: Essex County in the 1830s: The Rebellious Decade of
Upper Canada
DECEMBER 15: Windsor Rail Lands on the River
JANUARY 19: The Building of a Village: Heritage Village
FEBRUARY 16: Fur Trade in Essex County—North West Fur Trading Co.
MARCH 16: Early Alcohol, Wine, Beer and Spirits
APRIL 20: Designated Historic Sites in Essex County
MAY 16—Tentative: Tour of Designated Historic Sites in Essex County

1:00 pm—1:45 pm

BREAK

(coffee/tea will be available for purchase)

2:00PM—3:00PM

Books by Chris Carter will be
available for purchase at each Session.

A portion of all profits will go to the Education
Program here at Heritage Village



Call today to register for one or all of
these special programs by Chris
Carter, highlighting the fascinating
history of Windsor and Essex County.

**The Canadian Transportation Museum &
Heritage Village**
6155 Arner Townline, Essex, On
ctmhv.com 519-776-6909



“History As It Used to Was”

- by Ted Steele, HEIRS Director

Childhood Memories

At times our passion for history causes us to overlook our own history. **Have you shared, either in written or oral form, your own memories of growing up? Do your grandchildren know what it was like as a part of your family, and what we seniors were experiencing in our own early years?**

These are precious memories to us & sharing them helps keep them alive as part of family tradition and ‘legend’.

Among my earliest memories is the Christmas when I was 5 years old. I know the date, 1948, because a brand new song was a big hit that holiday season... “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer”.

I recall sending a letter to Santa, then curling up in the big chair on Grandpa’s lap to listen for the guy on the radio (CFCO Chatham) to actually read my letter. And he did, one evening; a big thrill! On the big morning, my four brothers and I had to wait for my parents to get up first, and call us to come downstairs.

We tried to speed this along, of course, by repeated trips to the bathroom with much flushing, and every now and then dropping a shoe off the bed onto the floor. In the afternoon, we made a visit to my grandparents, then home to a chicken dinner with huge noodles.

Also in my memory bank is a song that was a common holiday tune in the late 40s, and it seemed to disappear completely. I wonder if any of you can recall it....I believe it was Eddie Arnold who sang “Will Santy Come To Shanty Town (to a poor little boy like me?) **It always bothered my conscience to be reminded that some kids didn’t get a Christmas at all, and I suspect many were bothered, to the point that the song was no longer played.**

In recent years, a Roy Orbison song had a similar theme; “Pretty Paper” told of a street



beggar who sold pencils, cards, wrapping paper, and bows to survive, while shoppers were too busy to stop. It is also not commonly heard.

Snowball fights, wet socks in our galoshes, angels in the snow, skating outside until dark, making huge snowmen with all the neighbourhood kids helping, sleds and toboggans down the hillside, caroling door-to-door to spread Christmas spirit, and especially the true carols... with a stable, wise men, angels, & a reassuring message that ‘all is as it should be’.

**Times may have been bad,
but being a kid was very good.**

Our newsletters try to provide a different perspective on our own past & I’d like to have memories of other members to interweave with my own. It would be wonderful to have YOUR thoughts & memories to use in a column like this... dredge up those “Gee, I had forgotten about that” memories & send them to me or drop them off at HEIRS. Don’t worry about how it is written, as I just want the ideas.

Is there a better way to warm up than recalling wonderful moments from the past, especially those shared with family members & close friends? Don’t let them slip away on you, tell & retell them. They will help you stay a kid.

**You have to grow older,
but you don’t have to grow up!**

HEIRS Resource Centre

September to June (excluding December)

Tuesday & Thursday: 10AM - 3PM

Wednesday or for other appts. Call to confirm.

Memberships

\$25 CDN/US per person or couple: May 2016 to April 2017

Send cheque to: HEIRS PO Box 53, Harrow ON Canada N0R 1G0

Please include phone, fax, email, website & names you are now researching.

Non-member user fee for HEIRS Research Library: \$5 / visit (+ photocopy costs).

HEIRS Newsletter

Published 9 times per year, in conjunction with General Meetings held on the 4th Thursday of the month, from September through June (with the exception of December).
Receive full colour newsletters by email & save HEIRS the printing & mailing costs of B&W copies by regular post. Simply provide your email address to our office.



Kudos... to Greg Harrison at The Computer Centre in Harrow who provides HEIRS ongoing support for *all things technical* to help keep our office running smoothly.



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